

FORT MASSEY STAR

Autumn/Thanksgiving 2013

From the Pastor's Desk

A story is told of an industrious turkey farmer who was always experimenting with breeding to perfect a better turkey. His family was fond of the leg portion for dinner and there were never enough legs for everyone. After many frustrating attempts, the farmer was relating the results of his efforts to his friends at the general store get-together. "Well I finally did it! I bred a turkey that has 6 legs!" They all asked the farmer how it tasted. "I don't know" said the farmer. "I never could catch the darn thing!"

Thanksgiving is for turkey dinners (legs and all) with stuffing and cranberries. Or perhaps you are less conventional and quite happy with a quiet evening with a movie, popcorn and pizza. There is no formula for Thanksgiving. You don't have to do it the traditional way. Even newscasters are often heard referring it to turkey day, perhaps in the interest of political correctness.

But the leaves are turning and our minds turn toward colder, shorter days. There is a crispness in the air and we come, or at least some of us come, with a sense of gratitude in our hearts.

We hear the words of the Psalmist. "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever. Give thanks to the God of gods; His love endures for ever." Yet I expect that at least a few of us wonder what it means to give thanks. Does it mean to utter the words; to feel the emotion of gratitude deep within ourselves; to say the words in the hopes that it will sink into our beings and that we then might begin to be grateful? Is it words or is it a way of living? Sometimes we have to actually cultivate the act of thanksgiving. We can so easily see the world as half empty rather than half full.

Henry Ward Beecher, a Congregational preacher in the 19th century, wrote the following: "If one should give me a dish of sand and tell me there were particles of iron in it, I might look for them with my eyes and search for them with my clumsy fingers, and be unable to detect them. But let me take a magnet and sweep through it, and now would it draw to itself the almost invisible particles by the mere power of attraction. The unthankful heart, like my finger in the sand, discovers no mercies. But let the thankful heart sweep through the day, and the magnet finds the iron..."

A thankful heart can find in each day a blessing. May that be true for you.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Rev. Trent

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Autumn banner photo, at top of page, taken recently by our newsletter editor, Holly MacIntosh, near her home in Dundee, Cape Breton.



Your Outreach Report

Our committee has a crew of six, three ladies and three men. We meet on the last Tuesday of each month, except the summer months, for about an hour. We would be happy to welcome additional crew, so please think about joining us. Here are some of our activities.

REFUGEES: We were involved in helping to persuade Immigration Canada to revoke and order to deport a Pakistani family who would surely face dire consequences. Currently, we provide help to a woman from Uzbekistan who came here over ten years ago and has since been awarded citizenship. Efforts to have her daughter and grandchildren join her have been officially thwarted to date.

BRUNSWICK STREET MISSION: We continue to support the work of our United Church Mission as it serves, through a variety of ways, those who struggle with poverty. The annual breakfast fund-raiser will be held, October 23rd and our church plans to have at least three tables.

PHOENIX HOUSE: This is a community based organization that helps at-risk and homeless youth find a better path and we support their efforts through time and donations. As our organist, Simon will attest, they have a great choir. Hear them sing in our church, October 30th.

OUT-OF-THE-COLD EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER: Homeless individuals and families find nightly shelter during winter months in St. Matthews and we help by sending hot meals cooked in our church kitchen.

THE COZY HANDS PROJECT: An endeavour of the outreach committee, initiated and led by Muriel Hale, will be meeting again, starting in October. Members of the congregation might like to participate in sewing mittens for our brothers and sisters on the street. To date we have distributed many pairs of mittens and have materials for many more to be sown. Look for an announcement about this worthy endeavour in the church bulletin.

SENDING ORPHANS OF AIDS RELIEF (SOAR): This is a worthy cause to help orphans in Nkobongo, South Africa in the province of KwaZulu-Natal which has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in the world and the highest number of orphans due to AIDS. We continue to support a small group of volunteers who provide immediate care for over 400 children living alone or in children-headed households. Watch for details of our pre-Christmas bracelet sale in support of SOAR.

RATLAM SCHOOL IN INDIA: This project, to provide education for Shivani, a 7 year-old girl at Ratlam school which had been founded by United Church missionaries, has resulted in the child attending school and according to a report is doing well. She has sent us a letter and our chairman Ian MacDonald, who has lived in India, is translating it from Hindi to English. The children in our Sunday school are informed about Shivani.

NEW PROJECT UNDER STUDY: St. Luke's United in Tantallon invites small groups from Brunswick Street Mission to their church hall weekly. The hall has been furnished like a comfortable home. These "guests" socialize with friendly parishioners and enjoy a hot dinner cooked in the church kitchen. They may participate in food preparation. Our committee members who attended some of these sessions in July and August found that the guests were pleased to do some work in the garden and they had cut and formed a nice walking trail around the church grounds. We have been given guidance on this type of outreach, how it may be approached and advised about potential pot-holes were we to walk that way. These activities of this active team, under the chairmanship of Ian MacDonald, are carried out in the Christian spirit to help fellow humans in need. We look to our congregation for other outreach ideas and for support and advice in what we do.

Report prepared by Secretary, Angus McDonald

(The committee comprises, Ian MacDonald, Sally DeWolf, Muriel Hale, Leslie McLean and the Rev. Trent Cleveland-Thompson)

Upcoming Events:

UCW 'At Work'

Saturday, October 19th, 2013: 'Harvest Tea & Bake Table,' 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Free will offering.

Saturday, November 16th, 2013: 'Christmas Tea & Sale,' 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Tickets \$6.00. Tables: Pantry, Jams and Jellies, Crafts, Jewellery, Christmas and New-to-You.

December: 'Christmas Luncheon.' Date, time and place to be announced.

Submitted by Irene Parks